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## REVIEWS

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*The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures.* By ARTHUR F. BENTLEY. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Pp. xviii+499. \$3 net.

This is a real book. It is more genuine than it would be if it were more attentive to the minor literary conventions. Its author has in the first place all the qualifications which are conditions of winning the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from one of our foremost universities. He cannot be dismissed as unworthy of attention by the academic folk because he is not of their guild. His rough riding over more or less dignified theories is not the helplessness of a *Sonntagsreiter* with no training for the saddle. On the contrary he would probably not suffer by comparison with the majority of professors in the subjects which his book traverses if he were suddenly forced to compete with them in a searching examination on the technical literature of their fields. Added to this, he has the qualifications acquired by apprenticeship to the newspaper business, in which he made his way from the rudiments of reporters' duties to membership of the editorial staff of a leading Chicago daily. It can hardly be said that he is "at home" both among scholars and among men on the street, because in the sense of thinking and feeling as they think and feel it is doubtful if he makes himself very intimately one with either. He rather cultivates the attitude of an amused analyzer of the whole process, while he is gravely discharging his vocational function within the process. He knows the human game at first hand, however, through more variations than most philosophical writers, so that if his argument is not convincing it is surely not because he is outclassed by those to whom the reasoning is addressed.

In the author's own words, this book is an attempt to fashion a tool. I am not quite sure that I can describe the use to be made of this tool in terms that Dr. Bentley would accept, but as I understand him he wants to construct a tool which will serve to analyze and measure all the varieties of cause and effect which make up those processes of control which are indicated approximately by the term government. Thus it is a study in what most of the sociologists

would call the theory of social dynamics. The method is first, destructive, or negative criticism; second, constructive, or positive criticism. That is, Part I, entitled, "To Prepare the Way," arraigns a series of theorists, and charges them with attempting to put into circulation each a particular variety of false and futile interpretation of what actually occurs in society. Part II, "Analysis of Governmental Pressures," contains the author's substitute for these mischievous explanations. This notice will merely hint at the main thesis of the book, and will confine itself to a relatively unimportant preliminary.

Dr. Bentley begins by illustrating at great length, in Part I, what he chooses to regard as vicious interpretations of social processes. His reasoning appears first in criticism of instances chosen from everyday speech. Drawing his conclusions from them, he says, (p. 16),

The illustrations . . . show what kinds of explanation we currently make and currently find satisfactory for events around us. Their common characteristic is that some psychic quality, of goodness or badness, of love or hate, of intelligence or lack of intelligence, or some mixture of such qualities, is taken to explain what the actors have done. . . . Now the feature of these personal qualities to which attention must specially be given is that they are looked upon as a sort of "thing" acting among other "things" in the social world. They are a sort of "stuff," different, or not different, as one likes, from the material "stuff" of the world, but in either case interacting with the latter in series of events that can be linked together with each event in the series explaining the other that comes after it. For example, Tom sees the bully maltreating the boy. The bully act is there first. It knocks against Tom's "sympathy." The sympathy makes Tom act in a particular manner. The bullying is stopped by the impact. Brain states, or soul states, forming this "stuff"—it is all one in the practical explanation.

It is like billiard balls on a billiard table. The cue ball is some moral or other feeling, or capacity, and it knocks against another ball, which is some other person, or thing, or institution, and shunts it off to knock in turn against a third ball, which may be either a feeling or a thing. Thus the social process is supposed to go on.

Is this too crude a statement of such explanations? I readily admit its crudity. But does not the ordinary discussion of the place of education in social life adopt just this theory? Does it not treat so many boys and girls as having so many minds made up of so much feeling or thought-stuff? Does it not say, come let us heap up thought-stuff in such and such ways and it will produce the results we desire later on? And is it not by the proof of experience forever and ever wrong? I am not denying that educa-

tion exists and that it has its place. . . . I am only denying the "stuff" theory or explanation that is used in connection with them. I am denying that such an explanation explains anything.

The illustration and Dr. Bentley's explanation go much farther toward illustrating and explaining a crucial trait in his own thinking than toward clearing the way for the conclusion at which he aims. In the first place, the most evident peculiarity in his theorizing is insistence that the center of attention of those whom he criticizes is his center of attention, or if it is not it ought to be. Thus, if I am policeman or truant officer or parent or teacher, when Tom mixes with the bully, and if I ask, "Why did he do it?" Dr. Bentley demands that my "why?" shall be the last proposable psychological or sociological "why?" But my question is in fact nothing of the kind. It is the parental, or pedagogical, or magisterial "why?" and it is quite conceivable that even after I had threshed out social dynamics with Dr. Bentley to the last limit of analysis, and had been convinced by him, "sympathy" would still remain the best available symbol of the solution as applied to this particular action of this particular Tom.

This vagary is typical of Dr. Bentley's whole method as a critic of other writers. That is, he violates one of the most elementary rules of literary and historical exegesis, viz.: An occurrence, whether a theory or any other phenomenon, must be explained by its connections with its own attending circumstances. It must be judged with reference to the actual system of relations in which it had its setting, not as though it were an incident of other real or hypothetical conditions. My purpose, let us say, was to find out whether for practical uses blame or praise was Tom's due when he fought the bully. Dr. Bentley declines to take my view of my own purpose, and elects to judge me as conducting research in abstract social dynamics. Not only that, but when I sum up my account of Tom's actions in terms of "sympathy," Dr. Bentley takes the liberty of translating my explanation into the billiard ball analogy. Whether I am hod-carrier or philosopher, nothing that the term "sympathy" implies to my mind may have any resemblance to this unauthorized version. But Dr. Bentley's method of clearing the way is first to crowd it with men of straw,<sup>1</sup> and this specimen is no more arbitrary than those which he proceeds to construct by practicing like license with specified writers.

<sup>1</sup> That he is half-conscious of it appears on p. 26.

These might have proposed his problem, and might have held the views about it which he attributes to them, but as a general proposition they did not, and the issue which he makes with them is essentially fictitious.

In short, Dr. Bentley quarrels with uses of words which may have been entirely appropriate to the purpose which the writers had in mind, but which are assailable if one first forces upon them the interpretation that their authors had something entirely different in mind, viz., Dr. Bentley's present problem. If similar petulance were observed in a child in arms, the diagnosis would be not science but worms. The only visible way to placate this fretfulness would be absolutely to bar verbal recapitulations of every sort. The psychologist or sociologist with the problem of swallowing a lunch in time to catch a train would be estopped from urging the waiter with the plea, "I'm in a hurry." That would be predicating a state of soul-stuff which explains nothing! To escape Dr. Bentley's condemnation he would have to make his assertion in terms which would be equivalent to a detailed table of contents for the latest treatises on psychology and sociology. While getting the subject of his sentence fitted out with a predicate that would quiet Dr. Bentley, the helpless psychologist would not only miss his train but starve to death. Innocent and laudable uses of language, by means of which we escape such extremes, are the principal basis of fact on which Dr. Bentley founds his charges against virtually every social theorist who has ventured to publish.

The authors to whom the most space is devoted in Part I are, in the order in which they are discussed, Small, Spencer, von Jhering, Ward, Westermarck, Gurewitzsch, Gumpłowicz, Karl Pearson, F. A. Woods, Morgan, Giddings, and Dicey. The alleged vice of these types is that the first group, including Woods, posits "feelings and faculties" as social causes, while the other group sets up "ideas and ideals" as causes.

I have no interest whatever, except an entirely impersonal one, in attempting to defend or to justify myself against Dr. Bentley's use of me as one of the most awful examples, but as I am better acquainted with the facts in my own case than elsewhere I may use it as an actual instance to go with the supposed situation of Tom and the bully. The method of the book assumes that I have been pursuing one and the same specific purpose, whether I was addressing sophomores or seers, and that pur-

pose was invariably the problem of ultimate psychological analysis of social dynamics with which the second part of the volume before us attempts to deal. Putting together formulas which have connotations scattered along the whole range between talks to school boys and arguments with metaphysicians, and treating them as terms with a common denominator, Dr. Bentley has given me a character for mental incoherence which would acquit me of any charge, before any jury, on the plea of irresponsibility. If I had faced as many ways, and said as many things about the same subject-matter, as Dr. Bentley affirms, supposing that a person guilty of such intellectual gyrations could be able to achieve a lucid interval, I should celebrate it by subscribing to every word which he has said to my discredit. The truth is, however, that in order to make me available for pointing his moral, Dr. Bentley has in every instance vitiated his interpretation in advance by the fallacy of ignoring the center of attention which must always be the clue to the meaning.

Unfortunately we have not yet invented words enough to go around unless we use most of them in senses that vary greatly under different circumstances. Dr. Bentley's stock device of assuming a mechanical uniformity in situations to which language is applied, and of demanding invariability in the content of terms, leaves no chance for anyone to escape the ban of inconsistency, unless possibly by restricting oneself to judgments expressable by mathematical or chemical notation.

Speaking for the moment of American sociologists only, and reducing the details of individual effort to a composite picture, the truth is that, since the publication of Ward's *Dynamic Sociology* in 1883, the principal business of the sociologists has been less to explain social situations than to create a constituency capable of perceiving that there are social situations to be explained. To be sure, we have discussed every type of subject within the sociological horizon, from description of local groups to ultimate dynamics. We have tried to arrest the attention of all sorts and conditions of men, from wage-earners to social philosophers. We have tried to adapt ourselves to their various prepossessions and modes of thinking. We have used their terms if possible. We have often been overstocked with the *ad-hominem* argument. This was all incidental to the initial purpose of bringing social situations, and at last the whole social process, so within the field of view that a quota of competent

thinkers would recognize the existence of problems which the older social sciences had not discovered. Dr. Bentley does not appear to understand this, and his general attitude commits him to the opinion that, if such was the case it was all wrong, and we ought to have started at the bottom and confined ourselves to the elementary problems of social dynamics until they were disposed of for good. Most of us did not think so, and if I could begin over again with the benefit of present experience, my programme would not be essentially different from that which I instinctively followed. To be sure, it led me, while I was feeling my way along, to say a great many things which would look foolish to me if I were to inspect them with a view to reiterating them in our present situation. They do not cause me regrets when I think of the circumstances in connection with which they were written. Dr. Bentley not only puts together sentences of mine which were written years apart, and others which were addressed, some to youth in their teens and others to the maturest people I could imagine, but he shuffles sentences taken from different parts of the same book, and obviously referring to quite different problems, in such a way as to isolate them entirely from the purpose that might explain them. He then pronounces the whole conglomeration a hopeless confusion. So it is, but it is a confusion of his own deliberate and ingenious making, and the process of his chop logic in producing the chaos turns on the original fallacy of charging the writer throughout with the critic's purpose, instead of trying to discover the writer's purpose.

What I have written on sociology has been in effect the record of progress—by no means always in a straight line—from most elementary to less elementary analysis of social phenomena, always with the emphasis on the social, rather than on the psychical factors which would some day be traced out as the ultimate elements of the social. While I have at times approached the precise problem that Dr. Bentley proposes, I have always avoided it as much as possible, on the express ground that it was work for the psychologist rather than the sociologist. Since Dr. Bentley wrenches sentences from their context, ignoring the fact that they are concerned with almost any other phase of sociology more than with this particular one which is paramount for his interest, and since he condemns them because they are not a coherent system of doctrines, as the German says *aus einem Gusse*, about a question which none of them

ever properly raised, he would be liable to a much more serious charge, if the explanations were not found in the trait referred to at the outset, viz., the initial inability to entertain the idea that another thinker may or can have a center of attention different from his own.

Dr. Bentley masses his destructive criticism of my supposed system of social dynamics upon a classification of objects of human desire, which Professor Vincent and I first published in a little book which we do not call sociology at all. We aimed it at sophomores, and when we rewrite it we shall assume that even less technical analysis will appeal more forcibly to the sophomore mind. The book was intended merely as an eye-opener, and is psychology or sociology only in the sense in which elementary "nature-study" is biology. In that book we divided the objects of human desire into six classes, indicated respectively by the group words, health, wealth, sociability, knowledge, beauty, rightness. That is, all the things which we find people valuing may for convenience be assembled in or distributed among groups so designated. So far as we ventured into explanation that was quasi-psychological, we tried to visualize the play of wants in everyday people in terms of familiar objective stimuli classified for short in these six groups. On the one hand I have never for a moment imagined that this classification went to the bottom of psychological analysis, but on the other hand all the criticism that has been directed against it has counted very little against the experience of Professor Vincent and others, as well as my own, that it is an effective grouping of human aims for rough descriptive purposes. Whether for subbeginners in sociology, or for the maturest thinkers on some of its phases, the classification has proved to be a workable tool. Whenever it ceases to be available, I have no more weakness for it than I would have for a cross-cut saw when I wanted the work of a screw-driver. Dr. Bentley delivers the finishing blow to this classification in particular and to my dynamic interpretation in general with the taunt that I have never done anything with it. I should have said that, for one thing, I had used it half a generation as a whetstone for the minds of students, among whom I am glad to have numbered for a short time Dr. Bentley himself. I should not have claimed that because of it, but I should have pointed out that at least in spite of it some of them have since cut down to deeper distinctions than I found them making when that sharpener was put into use upon



their intellects. I should have said too that if Dr. Bentley or any one else would prove that I had ever regarded the offending classification in any other light than that indicated, I would cheerfully confess myself converted from the error of my ways, and would never more regard Dr. Bentley's Part I, as much ado about nothing.

This brings us to the main point of which my case is merely the most handy illustration. With slight changes of details, the same manufactured issue appears in Dr. Bentley's criticisms of all the other writers cited in Part I. That is, if they were interpreted with reference to their own center of attention, not to his, their availability as edifying examples would very largely disappear. The consequence is that, instead of preparing the way, Part I goes far out of its way to take on a needless and serious handicap. No one capable of reading the first five chapters of the book, whether acquainted with the authors discussed or not, is likely to reach the important part of the argument with as strong presumption in favor of the judicial competence of the author as would have been probable if those chapters had not been written. They are not relieved by a single gleam of evidence that the author has the slightest working acquaintance with the historical spirit. All his judgments of other writers are impressed by a single stamp, which is as wooden and inflexible as the molds in a brickyard. One hundred and seventy-two pages are consumed with a cumulative exhibit of the author's limitations. In a dozen pages he might have said what was worth saying, and so as to promote rather than prejudice his central purpose. The main thing is that popular speech, semi-technical usage, and even strictly scientific idiom employs language which taken literally connotes superficial and obviously erroneous explanations of social occurrences. Almost without exception the sociologists exemplify these loose and uncritical uses of terms. The obvious inference is that there is need of radical analysis of the psychic elements presupposed in explanation of social processes. If Dr. Bentley had been satisfied with so much, he might have drawn illustrations from the same writers whom he has cited, and they would doubtless have been quite willing to admit the propriety of his claim. By interpreting them as using the terms with reference to his problem, when in fact they were concerned each with from one to scores of quite different problems, all calling for occasional use of the same psychic terms, but obviously without

suspension of traditional liberties in adapting words to context, he raises needless suspicion either of his candor or of his competence.

But all this refers to the non-essential part of the book. The remainder, in spite of the unfortunate introduction, is worthy of rank as an event in the history of social science. No serious student of the essentials of social problems can afford to consider the argument *res adjudicata* until it shall have been weighed in many balances and tested in many crucibles. This *Journal* will give liberal space to criticism of Dr. Bentley's hypothesis. My own impression, which I shall hold subject to correction, is that his theory of social motivation substitutes for the individual billiard balls by which he supposes others to explain social dynamics, group boulders, in which his account leaves no more place for psychic factors, than we can discover in the masses of rock that make up an avalanche.

ALBION W. SMALL

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*Wage-Earner's Budgets: A Study of Standards and Cost of Living in New York City.* By LOUISE BOLARD MORE.  
With a preface by FRANKLIN H. GIDDINGS. New York:  
Henry Holt and Co., 1907.

This interesting little volume is the first fruits of the Greenwich Social Settlement resident fellowship for the scientific investigation of various social and economic aspects of city life.

The study has the intelligent backing of the influential Greenwich House Committee on Social Investigations, composed of E. R. A. Seligman, as chairman, with Franz Boas, E. T. Devine, L. Far-  
rand, F. H. Giddings, H. R. Seager, and V. G. Simkhovitch as fellow members. Mrs. More is the first holder of the fellowship and has embodied in the present volume the results of an intensive study carried on extensively. The data represent a selection intelligently and scientifically made. Under the exigencies of the case families of the poorest type were excluded, and a few small shopkeepers are included. On the whole the figures are valuable, because of the sane, scientific use made of them. The author established cordial personal relations with the families studied, and was thus enabled to overcome the inherent prejudice of artisan families against the amateur sociologist on the one hand, and was fortunate on the other hand in being able to prevail on the majority of families studied to keep simple accounts. After preliminary methodo-